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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: GAZA HUMANITARIAN UPDATE - JANUARY 12

REFS: A) Jerusalem 111, B) Tel Aviv 64

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Kerem Shalom was open for shipments on January 11. All trucks moved through Kerem Shalom on January 11. UNRWA contacts reported that they are operating 36 shelters for 28,116 displaced people. Contacts reported thousands more displaced outside shelters. End Summary.

Crossings

¶2. (SBU) January 12: Kerem Shalom crossing was open for an estimated 100 humanitarian and commercial shipments. Rafah crossing was open to a limited amount of aid supplies and medical cases. The Nahal Oz fuel transfer station was closed.

¶3. (SBU) OCHA contacts report that the GOI will no longer allow trucks to enter Kerem Shalom from the Israeli side of the crossing if trucks are not available and ready to load the cargo on the Palestinian side. This measure is designed to alleviate congestion on the Gaza side of the crossing, but may also slow shipments.

¶4. (SBU) January 11: OCHA and UNRWA contacts confirmed 94 truckloads (including 56 for humanitarian aid agencies) entered Kerem Shalom. A total of nine truckloads of humanitarian supplies, mostly from Saudi Arabia, entered via Rafah crossing. WHO reported that 18 medical evacuees exited via Rafah. Press sources and UNRWA contacts reported that approximately 25 Arab doctors (Egyptians and Jordanians) entered Gaza through Rafah crossing in recent days. All five truckloads of USAID goods made it through Kerem Shalom on January 11, despite earlier reports that only three got through.

Internal Movement

¶5. (SBU) UN contacts confirmed a "humanitarian pause" occurred from 1000 to 1300 local on January 12. UNRWA contacts reported that more Gazans appear to be coming out of their homes during these periods, but also that inconsistent timing and lack of coordination has prevented aid agencies and Gazans from taking full advantage of the "pauses." There are also reports of continued fighting during the "pauses." WHO contacts noted that there are fewer reported injury cases arriving in hospitals during these periods. UN contacts note that aid agencies must coordinate convoys with the IDF well in advance and run them throughout the day, making the "pauses" less relevant to their movements.

Food

¶6. (SBU) UN agencies plan to step up efforts to reach a greater number of beneficiaries. WFP Regional Director Daly Belgasmi reported that WFP plans to expand food distribution from 265,000 to

365,000 non-refugee recipients. (Note: WFP has only been able to distribute food to 80,000 recipients since hostilities began. End Note.) UNRWA also reported January 12 that it plans to expand food aid beyond the current 750,000 refugee beneficiaries. Seven of UNRWA's 10 distribution sites were open on January 12. (On January 11, UNRWA and WFP distributed food to approximately 21,000 beneficiaries. UNRWA reported that critical distribution sites in Zaitun, Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, and Sabra were closed on January 11 because of IDF operations.)

Displacement/Shelter

¶17. (SBU) Private sector contacts reported on January 12 that "hundreds of families" from northern Gaza have come to live with family members in Gaza City over the last three days. They feel more secure in Gaza City and are closer to food supplies, according to those contacts. The number of displaced people living with host families is unknown, but UN reports indicate the number is likely to be in the tens of thousands. OCHA contacts noted an estimate by the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights that 80,000-90,000 people have been displaced, half of whom are children.

¶18. (SBU) UNRWA contacts reported that, UNRWA is operating 36 shelters for 28,116 displaced people. According to UNRWA, its shelters are overcrowded and have shortages in blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, and generators. UNRWA plans to open new shelters in northern Gaza to decongest existing shelters.

Power

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¶19. (SBU) The Gaza power plant is producing 32 MW of electricity, according to the plant manager. He said that the plant received a shipment of 210,000 liters of industrial fuel on the morning of January 12 and that it has sufficient fuel to produce 32 MW through January 15. OCHA contacts reported that 70 percent of Gaza City is still without electricity because of damage to the local network. The power supply to the rest of Gaza is intermittent. As of 1700 local on January 11, three Israeli feeder lines (near Jabalia, Khan Younis, and Beit Lahiya) were down.

Water and Sanitation

¶10. (SBU) According to contacts in Gaza's water utility (CMWU), approximately 500,000 Gazans had no access to running water. The rest receive water for 4-6 hours no more than every two to three days. CMWU claimed to be waiting for GOI permission to import water tanks, pumps, and generators. In addition, OCHA contacts reported that CMWU is having difficulty maintaining its water and wastewater services because of damage to the network and difficulties in repair.

¶11. (SBU) OCHA reported that the IDF struck the Gaza City wastewater treatment plant (containing 250-300,000 cubic meters of wastewater) on January 10, damaging a treatment pond embankment and causing leakage. UNRWA and OCHA contacts report that Gaza's sewage pools are at their limit, and that the waste needs to be diverted to new locations. ICRC is working with CMWU to coordinate the movements of equipment and technicians to re-start the sewage pumps in northern Gaza.

Health

¶12. (SBU) WHO contacts in Gaza said on January 12 that emergency rooms in most hospitals are full of patients in need of immediate care. Gaza City hospitals have received several truckloads of supplies in recent days, and most ERs seem to have sufficient surgical kits. As of January 12, 15 of 18 primary health centers in Gaza were open with a nearly 40 percent increase in patient visits compared with pre-December 27 workloads, according to UNRWA. According to WHO and ICRC, the health sector's most urgent needs

continue to be access for staff, medicines, and equipment, along with patient referrals outside Gaza.

Cash

¶13. (SBU) The GOI approved an UNRWA request for a USD 20 million shipment of banknotes to Gaza to enable UNRWA to pay employee salaries and suppliers. The Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) and UNRWA are working out transport arrangements.

¶14. (SBU) Despite January 9 information to the contrary, the GOI has not approved the PMA's request o transport NIS 243 million and USD 6 million inbanknotes to Gaza to pay 94,000 UNRWA hardship cass and 77,000 PA salaries. Banks in Gaza remain cosed due to ongoing military operations and the ash shortage.

Walles